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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SOFIA 000916

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [BU](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PARVANOV EXPOSED AS COMMUNIST STATE
SECURITY COLLABORATOR

REF: A. (A) SOFIA 510

[B.](#) (B) SOFIA 1655

[C.](#) (C) 06 SOFIA 1499

Classified By: CDA Alex Karagiannis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1.](#) (C) Summary: The commission set-up earlier this year to review the files of the former communist secret services announced that President Georgi Parvanov and key members of his staff collaborated with the communist-era State Security agency. Parvanov was recruited by the State Security's external intelligence service in 1989, shortly before the communist regime collapsed, and his file was closed in 1993. His foreign policy advisors and members of his staff, some of whom now serve as Ambassadors to NATO capitals, also had ties with the communist intelligence service. The basic outlines of this information, but not all the details, had already been in the public domain, and had not affected Parvanov's overwhelming 2006 re-election. While the conservation opposition and some media outlets attempted to play up the revelations, they were overshadowed by the release of Bulgarian nurses from Libya. We doubt the revelations will appreciably impact Parvanov's political standing, but his State Security ties will likely continue to haunt him. END SUMMARY

PRESIDENT "WITH A PAST"

[2.](#) (C) After false starts, confusion, and plenty of political gamesmanship, Bulgaria's parliament set up a nine member commission to review the files of the communist secret services (reftels). Not much was expected of the commission, with many observers predicting that many files were purged or incomplete and that release would be slow and tortuous. The commission's first release of documents proved to be a bit more dramatic. On July 19 it released files that twenty-four current and former Presidential Administration senior officials, including incumbent President Parvanov and a former Vice President, had collaborated with the communist-era State Security Service.

[3.](#) (U) The commission found that President Parvanov had collaborated with the State Security's First Chief Directorate -- the communist-era external intelligence service. A historian specializing in Balkan history, Parvanov was approached by the so-called "cultural-historical" department of the external intelligence service. He was recruited as a secret collaborator under the codename "Gotze" in October 1989 and his file was closed in July 1993, the commission said. His State Security file, which was made public, includes a payment receipt and reports by the supervising officer, but no documents or information written or signed by Parvanov.

... AND THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

[4.](#) (U) The commission's list also features the President's

top aides, including all his present and former foreign policy advisers. Parvanov's current foreign policy aides (Emil Vulev and Pavlina Popova), his protocol chief, and his chief of ceremonies were also affiliated with communist-era external intelligence. His domestic policy aide in charge of analysis and forecasting, Dobrin Kanev, collaborated with military intelligence. Todor Velev, in charge of Parvanov's schedule, collaborated with the State Security's most feared department, the political police.

15. (SBU) Former staffers on Parvanov's team whom he subsequently appointed as Ambassadors, including to NATO states, also collaborated with State Security. Parvanov's former Chief of Staff Andrei Karashev, currently Ambassador to Greece, and two former foreign policy advisors -- Zlatin Trupkov, now Ambassador to the Hague, and Georgi Dimitrov, Ambassador to Belgrade -- all worked for the State Security external intelligence service. Another former foreign policy aide, Nikola Karadimov, now Bulgaria's envoy to Norway, worked for the department gathering intelligence in the field of science and technology. Parvanov's former Chief of Protocol, Atanas Pavlov, who now heads the mission in Lichtenstein, worked for the communist counter-intelligence service. Parvanov's newly-appointed economic advisor Ventsislav Dimitrov, one of the founders of the anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), was also a State Security agent. A number of former collaborators also served in other post-Communist presidential administrations.

QUESTIONABLE TIES

16. (SBU) Given persistent speculation about Parvanov's State Security ties, in recent years, the Commission's findings came as no surprise. Calls by the center-right

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opposition for Parvanov to come clean about his State Security ties led Parvanov to acknowledge in June 2006 the existence of a secret intelligence file on him (ref C). Parvanov explained that he had been approached by a "Foreign Ministry official," and not until later did he learn that the man was actually a State Security officer. Parvanov, who then worked as a researcher at the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was asked to consult on the publication of a book on Macedonian history. "The Gotze file contains information about me and not a word written by myself," Parvanov said. But his vocal stand against the file's disclosure led many to believe he had more secrets to hide. The President and his close associate, Interior Minister Roumen Petkov, were among the officials who had allegedly exercised tacit pressure on Socialist MPs last year to limit the scope of the commission law by excluding from its purview mid-level intelligence chiefs (ref A). The mid-2006 "Gotze" file scandal did not affect Parvanov's popularity and he won the October 2006 presidential run-off with an unprecedented 76 percent of the vote.

17. (U) Following the commission's revelation, the President's staff moved quickly to minimize potential damage. Parvanov requested his State Security file from the commission and promptly published its 29-pages on the presidency website. His press office said that Parvanov had admitted the existence of the "Gotze" file a year ago. In a series of interviews his Chief of Staff reiterated the President had no idea he had worked with State Security. He said the president's aides who had worked for State Security were "defending the national interest," and added they will retain their posts.

18. (SBU) The 29-page file that was made public did not include any papers signed by Parvanov. Some reports written by his handler, however, clash with Parvanov's assertion he was unaware that he was dealing with State Security. In one document the supervising officer describes Parvanov as a "well prepared historian" who has expressed "readiness and willingness to work with the State Security

services"...After a series of regular meetings, the person has become attracted to doing further work on behalf of the State Security,"

NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH?

¶9. (SBU) Naturally, the release of Parvanov's casefile has become political fodder. According to the center-right opposition (primarily UDF), however, the file that was made public has been tampered with and pages missing. Former Prime Minister Ivan Kostov said 36 pages, supposedly compromising material written by Parvanov himself, had been taken out on March 27, shortly before the commission was formed. Allegedly the missing pages constituted Parvanov's reports on the mood at the History Institute as a result of democratic changes in Bulgaria. Kostov directly accused the chief of the present-day National Intelligence Service (NIS), Gen. Kircho Kirov, of cleaning-up the presidential file. Furthermore, Kostov implied there was a connection between the cleansing of Parvanov's file and the mysterious death last November of the NIS chief archivist. (Note: The communist-era intelligence files, including the "Gotze" file, were housed at NIS, which is under the Presidency. End Note.)

¶10. (U) Kostov declined to say how he obtained this information but his allegations led commission chair Eftim Kostadinov to publicly admit that Parvanov's file might have been tampered with. "One can see that pages appear to be missing," Kostadinov, a former Socialist MP, told state radio. A few days later, however, following a hearing of NIS Chief Kirov at the commission, Kostadinov backtracked, saying there was nothing missing from the file but the pages were re-numbered according to a complex State Security methodology. His contradictory statements raised more questions about its authenticity. In damage control, Kirov, as well as his two predecessors, dismissed allegations of file-tampering. The commission is now scheduled to meet with NIS officials who kept the file before submitting it to the commission, as well as with Parvanov's State Security handler, to clarify whether parts of the file have been destroyed or have somehow gone missing.

¶11. (SBU) The center-right opposition as well as the extreme nationalist party Ataka called for Parvanov's resignation, saying, "it was a shameful fact that the Bulgarian head of state had been a part of the communist regime's repressive machine." Parvanov's ruling Socialist Party (BSP), in which he still enjoys strong influence, played down the issue. BSP officials said the opposition's reaction demonstrated the deficit of political ideas in the center-right. The ethnic Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a junior

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government coalition partner, echoed the Socialists, "The issue has long lost its topical relevance. The opposition evidently have nothing better to do than rake in the past," said MRF leader Ahmen Dogan, who was himself exposed as a former State Security agent back in 1997. Interior Minister Roumen Petkov scolded the commission, saying it misrepresented Parvanov's case. Foreign Minister Ivailo Kalfin, who previously served as Parvanov's economic advisor, went further, saying the law for the opening of the communist-era files was "harmful for Bulgaria." Kalfin made clear Bulgaria will not recall diplomats who had been exposed as State Security collaborators (an NGO group has started a campaign to force the recall). Sofia Mayor Boiko Borissov, the only Bulgarian politician whose polling numbers are as high as Parvanov's, remained silent, fueling speculation about a deal between the country's two most popular officials to not attack each other.

MUTED MEDIA REACTION

¶12. (U) With a few notable exceptions, the commission's revelation about Parvanov's State Security file was largely handled by the press as a non-event. The two largest

circulation daily newspapers, each with close ties to the Presidency, buried the news on their back pages. That led reputable Capital weekly to say in an editorial, "The former State Security collaborators are still in place even today. They not only control the state, but successfully spin information in the media." Monitor daily asserted that in order to get a job at the Presidency, one has to have been a State Security agent. Business-oriented Dnevnik ran an editorial titled "The Only Ones in the EU," claiming that in the rest of the Eastern European states, presidents, PMs and ministers usually resign if they have been linked to communist-era security services. "The question now is not whether Parvanov has been a State Security agent but whether the past of the young historian Parvanov influences the present of the incumbent President," a commentary in Sega daily said. The July 24 return home of Bulgarian nurses who had been under death sentence in Libya pushed the Parvanov story off the media spotlight altogether.

¶13. (C) COMMENT: Although hardly a surprise, the Commission's findings constitute the first official confirmation of Parvanov's past as a communist-era security service collaborator. The news, though troublesome and unwelcome to Parvanov, is unlikely to have a significant impact on his political standing. He easily weathered a similar scandal last year with his popularity unscathed. Speculation about missing parts of his file has left the public believing that the whole truth about politicians' links with State Security may never be unveiled. In that sense, it will feed public cynicism. Contacts from both sides of the political spectrum give long odds against any drastic developments, such as Parvanov's resignation -- except in the unlikely event of strong Western pressure -- but say the issue is likely to be resurrected periodically. The issue will gain a new impetus later this year when the Commission names State Security collaborators among government ministers and MPs. Politicians from both sides of the political spectrum are likely to be exposed. END COMMENT.

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